



CANORITA

St. Anthony's Province
Singapore - Myanmar
2015

The Story to the Cover

**“I am my Beloved’s and
His desire is for me.”
Songs of Songs 7:10**



A Hasidic tale:

One late evening, a poor farmer was on his way back from the market when he found himself without his prayer book. At the same time, the wheel of his cart came off right in the middle of the woods. It distressed him that this day should pass without him having said his prayers. So this is the prayer he made:

“I have done something very foolish, Lord. I came away from home without my prayer book and my memory is such that I cannot recite a single prayer without it. So this is what I am going to do: I shall recite the alphabet 5 times very slowly and YOU, to whom all prayers are known, can put the letters together to form the prayers I cannot remember. “

And the Lord God said to His angels:

“of all the prayers I have heard today, this one was undoubtedly the best because it came from a heart simple and sincere”.



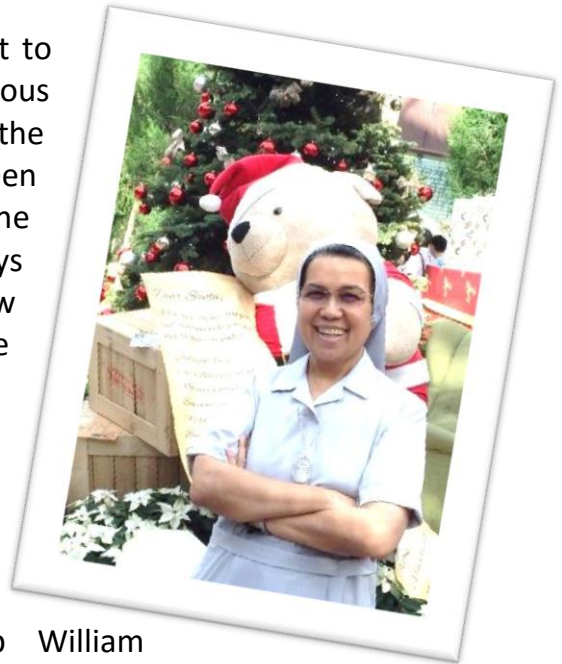
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Dear Sisters and Friends,

As we come to the end of another year, I want to thank, praise and glorify the Lord for His continuous blessings on our Province. This issue of the *Canorita'* gives us a glimpse of what has been happening in 2015. As we browse through the pages, let us count our blessings and live our days with deep gratitude in our hearts. We also know that there were much more that we are not able to share here.

2015 is significant for two important events in the Church and in the Archdiocese. Firstly, Pope Francis invited religious and consecrated persons to celebrate the International Year of Consecrated Life and secondly, Archbishop William launched the Year dedicated to Mary, Star of New Evangelisation. Our consecrated life and evangelisation go hand in hand. As religious, we cannot live one without the other. We are called to be a sign and witness to “the joy of belonging totally and forever to Christ” which is the source of our total fulfilment in love. Aren't all of us called to this? Our lay Canossians and partners too are invited to live and breathe the same spirit, that is, the Spirit of the Greatest Love in Jesus Crucified. As Canossians, we stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross as we witness also the love of the Father in the supreme sacrifice of the only Son. For the sacrifices of people whom we know and those we read in the news, we are with them in the same passion and hope as Our Blessed Mother.



We wake up each day to so much pain and suffering in our world. We read and hear every day about human trafficking, mass killings, bombings, famine, domestic violence and effects of global warming and destruction to the already strained world. Yet, I believe God continues to look at the world and says “It is good!” Not because of suffering but because He sees our dogged determination, not giving up but still trying each moment, each day to make the world a better place. I hope this issue of the *Canorita'* will do just that. I hope it places within our heart gratitude, praise and adoration to a Supreme God who loves us. Jesus Crucified reminds us that we need to live our life in union with Him in thanksgiving and count the blessings rather than mourn the pain we experience.

This issue is centered on gratitude, passion and hope as consecrated religious. The Chapter Resolution reminds us to live our *consecration as joyful and prophetic witnesses so that the world may believe*. Hey!!! Is that only for us Canossian religious? No! I believe the invitation is also to our lay Canossians and leaders who

share the spirituality and charism entrusted to us through St. Magdalene. As partners in mission, we share the gift of St. Magdalene through our compassion, commitment and cheerfulness. By virtue of our baptism as a child of God and even if you are not a Catholic, the Church recognises each one as people of God through whom the Sisters continue to reach out to the poor and the needy.

As a Province, we continue to support our ministries directly through bursaries to help individuals and families in need. Our generous benefactors respond to our appeal for funds for the different projects within our established ministries. Not all projects received funds from government agencies so we support in whatever way we can. For example the schools are able to continue the NOVA program for children who need a more disciplined life at home, school, work and play. Even a day of outing to the Universal Studio is also an opportunity for learning. Our lay leaders also believe that the children need a more level playing field vis-a vis opportunities to develop their potentials. Hence we reach out to the neediest and the poorest with our love and attention in whatever way we can – this has been our focus since the first Canossian Sisters came to Singapore.

The following pages carry the message from Pope Francis reminding the religious to go out and wake the world. We **look to the past with Gratitude, live the present with Passion** and **embrace the future with Hope**. We need to respond to the invitation every moment: *Inspice et Fac Secundum Exemplar*. As partners, we also inspire each other as we contemplate what it means to BE(ING) so that we bear fruit that will last in our DOING.

On behalf of my Council, Sr. Christina and Sr. Dorothy, we wish each of you God's abundant blessings for this Christmas 2015 and for the New Year 2016. May we welcome the Year of Mercy as a moment of KAIROS, a time when we open our hearts to receive God's Mercy and loving kindness. May His love challenge us to live the conversion we need. The contemplation of Jesus Crucified reveals the face of God our Father. From Jesus let us extend forgiveness to those who hurt us and seek reconciliation with those whom we have hurt and marginalised. Only then can we truly become visible signs of prophetic and joyful witnessing in the world where Hope is in danger of becoming a delusion. With Immanuel, God with us, may we be the beacon of Christ light and hope in our community, home, society and the world. Have a blessed Christmas and Happy New Year 2016!

*Blessings and best wishes,
Sr. Theresa, Sr. Christina and
Sr. Dorothy*



Am I Heritage ?

This was a startling revelation to me when I visited our Sisters of Sacred Heart Convent Malacca last December. Sr Retta Savarianan was keen to have us view their Heritage Gallery. When we stopped to view a wall of photographs, I recognized the Sisters and rattled off their names: Sr Elvira Forbice, Sr Louisa Sardorin, Sr Irene Paganini, Sr Marie Casati, Sr Josephine Borsani and more. Sr. Retta's eyes opened wide, she grabbed my arm and exclaimed "how do you know all these names? " I replied matter-of-factly "I should know. I lived with them; we were one province then, so we knew each other." It dawned on me that she and her Sisters were much too young to recognize the Sisters in the photographs.



What about me? Am I heritage too? The reality is that I've lived through enough history to recognize the photograph. So I AM HERITAGE too! Sigh!

Sr. Retta had a flash of inspiration. She came up close and gave me one of her pleading intentional looks. "Will you please help us? Just Look around. So many pictures and artifacts and no labels. No meaning! We are not history. We don't know what to write. Come and help us." There and then, I did a quick mental recall of entries in my diary and promised her that I'll reschedule and she will be hearing from me very soon.



After the visit, while walking away from Sacred Heart Convent, Joycelyn Chue, a young lady who was with me, confessed that she is super-excited about the task. She would love to be part of it. Then she began listing her credentials in museum work and that she was doing writing for museums and magazines. I was astounded at how quickly God has provided me with a competent assistant. He has started blessing the project immediately.

That's how our involvement began. It was so thrilling interviewing the senior Sisters. The oral history they narrated brought life to the photographs and artifacts. One Sister informed that there is a Sister Theresa Yeo residing in Segamat Convent, who is a living-walking chronology of dates. That very evening, I had to call her. As I was describing a photograph that I could not make sense of, Sr Theresa promptly told me the name of the event and the year that it took place. How could I not insist that she must make a trip to Malacca to put down in posterity all the historical data swimming in her head?



The research and writing began. Joycelyn's eleven years of working for a museum added the professionalism to my rambling style. We were not sure how the Italian Sisters' surnames were spelt. One surprising resource turned out to be the death record of Sisters, the booklet that we refer to at Vespers when we pray for the deceased.



I was impressed at how the community of Sisters at Sacred Heart Convent contributed their personal talents to the gallery. Sr Mary Saw sewed several habits depicting how the Canossian habit evolved over the last century. These she put on the mannequins that another Sister obtained from some department store. Sr Elizabeth Chan, the artist painted seven watercolor paintings of the Sorrows of Our Lady. These are appropriately displayed at the entrance of the heritage gallery that depicted the Charism.

A few remarkable alumnae of Sacred Heart Convent were instrumental in the setting up of the museum. Amy Lee, who did the layout and artwork, Belinda and her daughter, Isabelle and others. Their dedication to this project came from their pride and love for their alma mater and the Sisters who educated them.



Joycelyn's afterthoughts...

"The time spent in Malacca was filled with gifts and blessings. We were able to celebrate Sr. Elizabeth Chan's golden jubilee with her. I experienced Sr. Elizabeth's hospitality, care, and generosity. Though quiet and gentle, I felt the great love she has for everyone through her words and deeds. I also felt the joy she has, and what a gift her vocation is to her. She took great care of us during our stay – obliging us and making a "panettone" for us, seeing to our needs and quickly whisking the dishes away for washing so that we could return to our work. While I enjoyed working on the Heritage Gallery and learning about the Sisters who have gone before us, the warmth and kindness of the living Community is what is most memorable for me.



Sr Cecily adds:

It was in May that Joycelyn and I returned to Malacca for their 110th anniversary celebrations. We were not surprised when Sr Retta assigned us the task of overseeing the official opening ceremony of the Heritage Gallery. We worked hard and joyfully; from vacuuming and dusting to writing speeches and tying ribbons, from briefing the Guest-of-honor to ushering visitors and acting as museum guides.



All these tasks gave us life. And we wallowed in the gratitude of the Malaysian Sisters for our little contribution to their Heritage Gallery.

Joycelyn's Thoughts

It's intriguing that Sacred Heart Convent (SHC) used to have a retreat house/sanctuary. While this had changed by the time I set foot in SHC, I saw the 'mural' welcoming people to the Oasis.

In the brief time I spent there, it was for me an Oasis as I am sure it was for many others.

As I researched on the 110 years of history, I received refreshment in great abundance - spiritually, mentally, interacting not only with the Sisters but others - the alumni, encounters with Amy, Belinda and her children, and hearing of the many helping hands that came forward to help.

I enjoyed watching the children fill the chapel for Mass on the morning of their examinations. This thought struck me: How the Sisters make Jesus known to the children and invite them to turn to Him. How beautiful it is to see how they do it!

It is reminiscent of how I felt moved when I was researching for the Eduplex in Singapore. As I looked at the photos, the sense of God's guiding hand and presence came upon me, I felt awed with the awareness that none of it would have been possible without Him, and how close He was to the Sisters and how He watches over us.



Sr Cecily and Joycelyn's parting words:



Sr Cecily and Joycelyn having a meal with our Malaysian Sisters.

“A big heartfelt THANK YOU dear Sisters of Sacred Heart Canossian Convent for giving us this opportunity to appreciate our past. The awareness of what the Sisters who came before us did spurs us to live the present with joy and zest.”

Sr Cecily Pavri and Joycelyn Chue



NOSTALGIA

– from the lens of a former studentto embracing bittersweet memories of days gone by!

“Oh, What a night!!!”

This was the consensus of the group of well- dressed ladies who were attending the get- together party organized by the Canossian Alumni, held at the 5 star hotel of Grand Park City Hall in April this year. Some were accompanied by the men in their lives, others came on their own or in groups. The purpose of such an event, the rare opportunity to meet up with friends who had shared common past in having been schooled at various Canossian Institutions over the years, was not lost among this enthusiastic group of ex-students.

Those in attendance were former students, esteemed teachers, many of whom have retired from teaching, along with a good number of Canossian Sisters to whom we owe our spiritual well- being during our formative years!

The African theme of the night was captured, instantly, the moment the elevator doors parted upon their arrival at the banquet hall level of the hotel. Excited guests, dressed to their nines, some in African- inspired costumes, trooped forth were promptly greeted by the lively heart thumping beat of drums, distinctly African in rhythm, style & tempo!

Set against this very lively backdrop paraded the party-goers in a crescendo of voices! Everyone had to speak with voices raised in order to be heard over & above the din & loud shrieks of delight coming from every corner of the banquet hall! Each shriek signaled the recognition of someone for another- that of long lost classmates who were last seen together as teenagers at 16 years of age, now turned 61, or older!

The night of fun & entertainment incited precious memories of days gone by when I, myself was a pupil at St Anthony’s Convent, having obtained my education from Kindergarten right up to the completion of the then Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. The nostalgia of those happy school days lingered with me long after the wonderful gathering of “old” friends & had caused me to lose some precious hours of sleep that night.

Having studied only at one school, St Anthony’s Convent, throughout my school life I am convinced that my life has been shaped by the Canossian Sisters, many of whom were my teachers & mentors. I owe my sincere appreciation and gratitude to them for who I am today in terms of my spiritual well-being. However, I consider myself even more fortunate than the other past students who, I am sure, share my

sentiments only because I have my very own sister who is a Canossian Sister & who, by her shining example, single-handedly converted not just my immediate family, but many members of my extended family, as well, to Catholicism.



Angeline Tan with Sr Mary Tan

My happy thoughts took a pause, at this point, as I reflected on that eventful day in 1959 when my parents became aware of my sister's intention to join the Canossian Sisters. That was a very dark period endured by my whole family who at that time, with the expectation of my sister and I, had yet to embrace the Catholic faith. We were a family of "free thinkers", a term often used to describe people who did not practice any religion. The few months before she joined the convent, to be sent to Hong Kong for training for 3 years, were almost intolerable as there was so much sadness & emotional upheaval within the family. My parents could not bear to let her go abroad for such a long period of time with no chance of seeing her as travel, then, was just not affordable for most people, including us. Neither was there easy access to international telephone calls nor was internet connection available. To put it simply, my parents had felt that they were losing a daughter altogether! My mother, who had only elementary education in Chinese, had to equip herself to write letters to my sister with the help of a Chinese language dictionary. Having lost touch with written Chinese for so long, her determination was such that she self-taught herself to read & write in Chinese all over again in order to be able to communicate with my sister from afar. I do not wish such sufferings of my parents on anyone as it was truly insurmountable for them and for all of us. My sister's training extended beyond 3 years as she proceeded to London, for a further 3 years, to pursue a nursing course after Hong Kong. By then, it was time for her to take her perpetual vows which meant an extra year spent in Rome before her return finally,

after a total of 7 years abroad. Throughout those years my mother had yearned for my sister's return, sadly, my beloved mother died of cancer not long after my sister's eventual return to Singapore. It is terribly painful for me to reminisce on those days.

Every dark cloud has a silver lining so they say, for us, our sadness was elevated by my mother's baptism before her death. It was a true blessing because my mother had sworn off the Catholic religion for robbing her of her most beloved daughter. She had managed to overcome her disappointment & embraced the Catholic faith before her passing. Today, more than half the members of our immediate & extended families, together, are baptized Catholics.

Following that night's adrenaline rush, after a memorable alumni dinner of great fun & laughter, memories of mine were tampered with sadness as I recalled past events which had affected my family badly. I am pleased, if not surprised, that both my parents eventually embraced the Catholic faith in baptism & had acknowledged my sister's vocation as God's blessings upon them.

As a former student of St Anthony's Convent, the Canossian Sisters have always been a part of my life. Sisters who had taught me during my school years & who remain fondly etched in my memory include Sr Victoria, Sr Bruna & Sr Margherita, to name a few who had since attained eternal life! So, yes, memories that night, following the alumni dinner, were bittersweet.

I am so blessed to have had the privilege of having grown up under the wings of the Canossian Sisters to whom I owe my gratitude & affection.

- *Angeline Tan*



..... RECONNECTING

In 1824, St Magdalene of Canossa founded the Solidarity of Our Lady of Sorrows, in Verona, Italy, an association for Christian mothers. It was established in Singapore on 10 April 1908 by Reverend Father Rufino de Espirito, the then Acting Vicar General for the Portuguese Mission in Singapore.

Back then, members used to meet monthly & they would participate in church events and celebrations on various feast days. At such events they would be uniformly dressed in purple coloured attire and soon earned, for themselves, the nickname of “The Purple Ladies”.

According to records kept, since its inception here in Singapore, a line of Portuguese Mission priests led as Spiritual Directors, with Monsignor Ambrose Vaz who is its current Spiritual Director. The Canossian Sisters assumed the role of Spiritual Advisors. Our late Sr Virginia was one of its Spiritual Advisors followed, in later years, by Sr Mary S.



Throughout the years, members of the Solidarity held their regular meetings in the premises of St Anthony’s Convent, from the time when it was located at Middle Road. With the move of St Anthony’s Convent to Bedok, the group moved along as well & continued to meet monthly at the school’s new premises in Bedok. However, when the Bedok site underwent its major rebuilding & redevelopment programme, the group had to seek alternative meeting venue. It was fortunate they were offered a meeting room at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, in Siglap, which they had continued to meet until recently. With the completion of the redevelopment of Canossa Convent Primary School, at Aljunied Road, the Solidarity is now holding its meetings there.

As of this year, 2015, I have assumed the role of Spiritual Advisor to the group.

There are over a hundred members officially recorded in the membership list, however, less than 30 members attend the monthly meetings. There are a number of reasons for the vast number of absentees, understandably, the several changes of meeting venues over the past years could be a main reason.

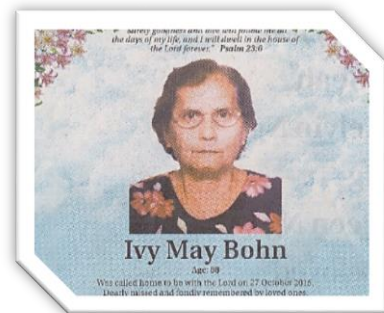
Given the situation, reconnecting with those who have not been coming to the monthly meetings became a priority for me. With the help of several members, among them Ivy Khoo & Elsie Yeo (sister of the late Sr Elizabeth Yeo), together, we embarked on a mission to reconnect with every member on our list. We set aside one day, each week, to go knocking from door to door to try and track them down. This exercise is bittersweet for us, it is both joyful & sorrowful. Joyful, when we are

successful in reconnecting with some of them who are still residing at addresses we have on record. Unfortunately, given their current health conditions, they are physically not able to make their way to the monthly meetings. Sorrowful, when those other members on the list are either, no longer residing at the given addresses or have passed away! Sadly most, if not all, of those contacted are very advanced in years and Dementia seems to be a common ailment among many of them.

A visit worth noting which had left us truly impressed, nonetheless, is Madam Mary Chew, who is 91 years old. Despite being advanced in age, herself, she is still the main caregiver of 2 of her grown-up children, a daughter 71 years of age & a son 59 years old. They are both mentally disabled and are not able to take care of themselves, hence, still totally dependent on their aged mother. Madam Chew's situation embodies the very essence of the Solidarity, an association set up specifically for, & about, Christian mothers!



Another bitter sweet experience worth sharing is that of our visit to another former member, Madam Ivy Bohn. She was 88 years of age, had dementia & was very ill. She was not lucid yet managed to give a weak smile upon seeing us, her visitors. We had spent some time with her, and her daughter, who remained by her bedside throughout our visit. The next morning Ivy Khoo, who had left her contact telephone number behind, received a call from Madam Bohn's daughter, informing us that her mother had passed away late that night of our visit. The daughter, having heard from us on the reason for the nickname of "The Purple Ladies", in relation to the Solidarity of Our Lady of Sorrows' purple dress code, then informed us that her deceased mother would be dressed in purple as she was laid in the casket!



We are certainly pleased with the responses generated from our house visits, even if not all visits have happy or positive outcome. The families of these ladies are grateful for our visits, especially when they note the joy on the faces of their mothers to have someone come to visit them.

It is heartening that such simple acts can generate much joy and pleasure for those on the receiving end. As for us, we derive great joy from each successful attempt in our mission to reconnect with these past, active, members of the Solidarity of Our Lady of Sorrows.

- Sr Mary Tan

VISIT FROM OUR “FOUNDRRESS TODAY”

Sr. Anna Maria Babbini (Congregational Leader) & Councillors Visit to our Province

Sr. Anna Maria and her Councillors had a gathering with the Provincial Councils of Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore in Kluang from 11 – 17 June 2015. The Sisters were challenged and reminded of the need to live and move towards a consecrated life that is more contemplative, more fraternal and rich in hope. The Canossian Family has to continue with a mentality of change embracing traits of joy, prophecy, fraternity and mission, following paths already explored and appraising new ones.

We were pleasantly surprised that at 2.30 pm, the long awaited and expected VIPs had already arrived in Jalan Merbok and were warmly welcomed by the Sisters of the community and some of the Sister – retreatants, who stayed back for lunch.

The whole Province, including our elderly Sisters in their wheel-chairs were gathered in the Conference Room to listen eagerly and enthusiastically to whatever Sr. Anna Maria Babbini had to share with us. Her talk was simple and based on the theme of the General Chapter. She posed this question, what does it mean, “To be joyful and prophetic witnesses of the Gospel?”

Sr. Anna Maria added that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation, “the Joy of the Gospel”, tells us that the joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. Daily, when we are fully aware and conscious of the presence of God, we become peaceful, joyful, loving and grateful persons. This is the joy which we experience daily,



General Council and Provincial Councils of Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore



General Council and Provincial Council of Singapore- Myanmar



Province of Singapore- Myanmar gathering to meet the General Council

amid the little things of life, as a response to the loving invitation of God our Father: “My child, treat yourself well, according to your means.... Do not deprive yourself of the day’s enjoyment”

She further remarked that integration is simply the gospel we daily meditate and put into practice, but the problem is that we are not simple people; we complicate our lives with many affairs and problems.

Sr. Anna Maria posed the question as to whether we think that religious life is about to finish. We are encouraged to keep alive our hope, for religious life is an important aspect of the church.

Many religious congregations have faded away after 200 years, and our congregation is in this category, for we have celebrated our 200 years of history. When we meet a crisis, either we die or there will be new growth. She strongly recommended us to grow in our quality of life and to become joyful witnesses, for the world is in need of them. Our Institute is the gift of the Church.

We were once again filled with hope, encouraged and challenged to become joyful and prophetic witnesses of the gospel, so that the world may believe.

We then proceeded to the chapel for our group photos, taken by Mr. Leong, a professional photographer. Immediately, after that, the whole assembly praised and thanked the good Lord with a prayer liturgy cum Vespers, followed by a sumptuous catered dinner.

All wonderful and enjoyable events have an ending and soon we bade farewell to our Sisters, who were leaving early the following morning for their canonical visit to Timor Leste and Australia.



Province Gathering for Lunch



Province of Singapore- Myanmar with the General

Pastoral PRESENCE

St Anthony's Canossian Primary School & St Anthony's Canossian Secondary School

Since 2013, Sr Geraldine and I have been making our presence felt at both our Primary and Secondary schools, being physically present there at least four times a week, mingling with students – from canteen to school office, to classrooms; with groups or individuals, at meetings or just having drinks with them!

It is really hard to say what, exactly, we have been doing or what we have achieved. More importantly, we will both say, it is about WHO WE HAVE BEEN for each and everyone whom we come into contact- be it in listening to a cleaner or a canteen operator, teaching and non- teaching staff members, parents or students- armed with a smile, actually goes a mile.

This year 2015, Fr Edward Seah and Fr Terence Kesavan have kindly agreed to celebrate the Eucharist at 6.45 am, in the Chapel, on the first Wednesday of every month. This has been an anchor, a most significant gesture, that makes SACPS and SACSS feel ONE in Jesus and unites us in the mission of an Education that emphasises the spiritual dimension, as foundation for the formation of the heart.

The following are snippets of events at SACPS and SACSS in recent months.

1. Archbishop William Goh visited and met with students of AGAPE CLUB – a newly formed group to provide opportunity for Catholic students, from Pr 2 – 5, to learn how to pray and appreciate the Word of God.
2. Legion of Mary – Some 20 students eagerly attend, either on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons, or as often as they can. We had a great party on 16 July in celebration of the Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel.
3. Primary 1 students look forward to seeing Sr Geraldine every Thursday morning for catechism.
4. Secondary Students are engaged in Conversations on relevant topics like the Sanctity of life and same sex marriage.

We are glad to acknowledge there is no greater JOY than having the opportunity of making Jesus “known and loved” to captive audiences. St. Magdalene was indeed right to have said that the “school can be the ministry that is most challenging” but it is still the place where the potential for the greatest impact is also real!

So help us God!

St. Anthony's Apostolic Group

BLOCK 92 Bedok North Ave 4 Street 4



Sr Geraldine Lim, Sr Christina Yeo

It is indeed a great blessing to live 5 minutes from the school and our flat continues to be a haven for VAT (Vocation Animation Team) meetings as well as for the occasional visits by the Principals and staff of SACPS and SACSS.

We are always glad to offer a simple, yet delicious meal prepared with much warmth and love by Sr. Geraldine Lim to all who come- searchers, our Sisters and our friends.

The silent and eloquent presence of the Blessed Sacrament reminds us, daily, of the reason for our community life and our mission – to make Jesus known and loved, inspired by the spirit of St Magdalene.

REALLY! An experience of Faith!

Query from a Primary One student:

Sr. Geraldine Lim brought her Primary One students to the Chapel and said to them, “Jesus is present here” - immediately one bright, little Korean girl exclaimed “Really?” with an innocent and inquiring look!

It was a surprise, if not shock, to witness the spontaneity of the 6-year-old. It challenged us, adults, to reflect on “How different faith formation is today! We cannot take for granted that children, today, will accept what we say without thinking or questioning its content!

REALLY we need more than our own faith conviction to be with the little oneswe need to be JESUS for them before they can believe that JESUS IS REAL!



Sr Christina Yeo

One Love, One Mission, One Canossian

Thoughts on How Blessed We Are to Have the Sisters in the School

This year-end marks 2 ½ years since Sr. Gerry Lim joined us at SACPS as our resident Chaplain. How time flies! And what a blessing her presence has brought to the school!



Sr. Gerry joins us every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the school day; and on Thursday mornings she teaches Catechism. As school Chaplain, her work includes spiritual guidance in faith-based programmes and activities and she also plans the liturgy for Masses. In addition, Sr. Gerry helms the *Agape Club*, a club for Primary 2 to 5 Catholic girls. Members of the club are guided by Sister to deepen their

relationship with God through meditation, sharing of the Word of God, prayers and listening to stories of Saints. In school, Sr. Gerry also spends time getting to know the staff and girls, listening to them and helping those in need.

To the girls in school, Sr. Gerry is someone who can solve all problems – from overcoming feelings of loneliness to resolving arguments with friends. When the girls are upset - be it with friends or family members, there is always Sr. Gerry who will listen to them and comfort them. When they forget to bring money for recess, Sr. Gerry who is in the canteen will help solve their problem. In Sr. Gerry's bag, there are often sweets and biscuits which the girls have grown so fond of. And the staff members are not left out too. Sr. Gerry often has fruits to share with them! Sr. Gerry is that one person whom the girls can turn to because they know she loves them unconditionally.



Sr. Gerry's presence in the school manifests the love of the Canossian Sisters for the girls under our care. Together with Sr. Christina Yeo who is seen mainly in the secondary school, Sr. Enrica who teaches Catechism and shares wonderful stories about God, Sr. Gerry represents the Canossian Sisters in school. With the many Canossian Sisters who join us at school Masses and celebrations, it has become quite the *norm* that the Canossian Sisters are very much a part of our school's community. It is also heartening for the parents to know that the sisters are always around and are very much a part of the school family. Many parents, Christians or otherwise, feel reassured and confident because they see the sisters in school and know that they are praying for everyone.

My staff and I are grateful for the love, joy and comfort that the sisters bring with them. We know that when things are difficult, the sisters will be there to support, pray and listen to us. Their faith and their self-giving service has always been an inspiration for all of us. What the sisters do, their generosity and love, and their presence in the school remind us of what it means to live a life built on love. SACPS is truly grateful to God for the Canossian Sisters who are so much a part of our school, our family.



3 Sisters are seen here with the girls.
Can you spot them?



Sr Enrica teaches Catechism and shares wonderful stories about God.



Canossian Sisters joining the school for masses and celebrations.



Eugenie Tan
Principal
St. Anthony's Canossian Primary School

Wisdom from the Young Ones

Sr Cecily gave me a book recently entitled:

All I really need to know I learned in Kindergarten: By Robert Fulghum

The author says: All I really need to know about how to live and what and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandpile at the Sunday School Kindergarten.

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don't hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don't take things that aren't yours.

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

Take a nap every afternoon.

When you go out into the world, watch out for the traffic, hold hands and stick together.

Be aware of wonder, Remember the little seed in the styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody knows why or how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even in the styrofoam cup – they all die. So do we.

I began my religious life aged 27 teaching in Canossian Convent Kindergarten at Jalan Merbok with Sr Enrica Cassaniga as the principal.

Yes, yes, we were trying to inculcate the above values to the little ones with very strong dosage of faith, prayers, love and fun.

I realised as I look down memory lane and now at Magdalene's Kindergarten that our young ones also teach us life's most fundamental values:

Let me illustrate with a few anecdotes:

1. A young boy one day came up to me and indignantly exclaimed: Sister.. that boy bited me!



Bited? My brain went uh.. No Ivan, he bit you not bited you.
Ivan stared just for a second and then spoke louder still. I don't care: He bited me.

I realized for any lesson or point to get through to any body, I have to be present to that person.

Somebody bit Ivan.. he cares two hoots about the grammar.



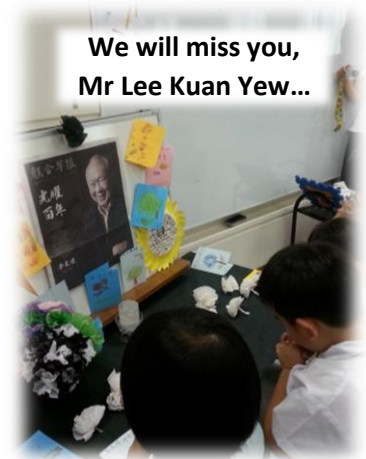
Whao! We made it! 8 kilometres of walking!!!

2. Another boy loves to compliment me whenever I put up things done by the kids. So nice Sister, so beautiful, he would say However, he is lazy as all kids are when playing and has peed quite a number of times. In desperation I warned that he will be punished if he did it again.. Of course it happened. "Howard, Come here", I said. He came.. took my hand and kissed a number of times and said: "Sister I love you."

Whoa.. what happened to my plan of discipline.. I must examine my heart. I learned: Mind and Heart must go together in all things:

3. Here at MK.. I saw how the kids, especially the N1 cling to their mums and dads before they let go and happily run towards their classrooms, sometimes hand in hand with their friends. It truly warms my heart..

Love and friendships.. these are the stuff that will get us through life.



4. In April this year we had a fire drill. We were anxious to make sure that the procedure does not exceed the stipulated time and to make sure that we are all safe in one place: the open space at the brown gates. However we forgot one thing, until a girl from N2 asked: Where is the fire? We laughed!

But it was no laughing matter. I learned that in Life I need to ask the correct question: In this case: where is the fire.. so that we could move away from it instead of heading towards it.

In obedience I said yes to Sr Theresa when she asked me to be the supervisor of Magdalene's Kindergarten. Well I must say I enjoyed myself in all aspects.

Working closely with Sr Dot and the Staff of CCK and MK, it has been a year of God's blessings on all of us.

- Sr Margaret Goh

Faith and Challenges at St. Joseph's Home

*And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
(Lk 5:31–32)*

One important message from Pope Francis' pontificate is his reminder to us all that God has a special place in His heart for all peoples at the peripheries, among these: the homeless, prisoners, prostitutes, the sick and elderly forgotten by society. Especially in an affluent country like Singapore, where many live sheltered and comfortable lives, it is easy for us to limit our concern to those we are comfortable with. Yet even as we give ourselves a pat on the back for being a good Christian, we forget that the Gospel remains distant and unreal to many people at the peripheries.

We were blessed to have a chance to spend a month of pastoral work at St. Joseph's Home. Here, we came face to face with human frailty and dependence – residents who need help to eat pulverized food, who need assistance to move around or clean themselves – people whom our society tries to hide. But we also saw the response, stemming from faith, by the Sisters and their collaborators – the nurses, therapists and staff. They try their best to provide good care to the residents in a timely manner, but more importantly, they take time, despite their busy work, to be with the residents and know them as persons, thus witnessing to their inherent dignity and bringing love into their lives.



L-R: Br Clarence, Mr Nani, Mr Beins, Br Simon

One important lesson through this pastoral is the value and importance of accompaniment even when we think that we cannot alleviate another's difficulties and pain. For we are immersed in a culture which sees problems and values people by their ability to make things 'normal' again; sometimes we feel that people turn to us, including to priests and religious, for help to solve problems. But helping them make concrete improvements in their lives must be accompanied by our availability to journey with them through their difficulties, and sometimes, just sometimes perhaps, that simple presence is a more effective way for the merciful face of God to show through.

When we think we are problem-solvers, the peripheries can appear daunting – we are limited and cannot right everything. But neither did Jesus when he walked on the face of this earth. Our faith challenges us to value being with people despite our limitations so that God can do what He will in their situations. Do we have faith to let the Good News resound once again? **Brother Clarence Yue and Brother Simon Ho**

Live the Life You Love

When I first came across an exercise book cover with these words, “LIVE THE LIFE YOU LOVE”, my mind went straight away to living the Religious Life.

How fortunate I am to be able to live this life that I love well.

From my first call to be a baptized Catholic in 1967 and then to pronouncing my First vows in 1978, I have the blessings of living an interesting and challenging life. Having entered the convent with my own mind set at the age of 25 was not easy for me to conform to Religious thinking and living in community. However God teaches me patiently through my Sisters, events that happened and through the reading materials made available in the convent.

I remember a time when I was most unhappy with a very demanding Sister and while cleaning the living room book shelf, my eyes fell upon a copy of the newspaper from Rome – L’Osservatore Romano. On the cover page there was an interesting logo of three figures linking hands and dancing happily.

Below the logo were these words of St. Augustine,



Such wise words opened a window in my mind and I became more receptive to learn what Charity means and why it has so much to do with humility. No wonder our Foundress encouraged us to practise the virtue of Humility. Books on our Charism, thoughts of our Foundress suddenly became more meaningful to me. I enjoyed the



articles and books written about our Canossian Charism and how one has to be an anchorite at home and an apostle outside.

The apostolate of the school and the Parish are rich fields of learning and giving. I have good memories of service and also times of misunderstandings, times when problems were unresolved and respect not

given. Conflict management was difficult but learning to live Charity in Humility helped me through.

As the years go by I have learnt that it is more important to live well with my Sisters in community and in the Province, to focus more time in celebrating my victories than to nurse my wounds.



I have been given a lot and what a grace now to be here in the Myanmar Mission to give with love and in humility. To make JESUS KNOWN AND LOVED to so many young people who are thirsting for a brighter future, is for me a tremendous privilege and joy.



In this year dedicated to Consecrated Life I pray that more and more will be attracted to live our Canossian Charism as Religious Sisters, Lay Canossians and Educators. We have planted the seed here in Myanmar and I BELIEVE that the harvest will be plentiful. Our main concern now is to pray, discern and serve in Charity and Humility hand in hand with our local partners.



May St. Magdalene and St. Bakhita who came much earlier than we did, continue to intercede for us and may God bless all of you for your loving support. Your faith in me has helped me,

“Recall the past in GRATITUDE

Live the present with PASSION

Embrace the future with HOPE”



**Sr. Angela Ng
Myanmar**

Our Sisters serving in Myanmar (L-R): Sr Joana da Silva, Sr Angela Ng, Sr Marion Liong, Sr Jacqueline Chin

Canossians at St. Anne's Church

To mark the Year of Consecrated Life, Fr. Edward Seah of St. Anne's Church invited us, Canossian Sisters and our Lay Partners, to share our Canossian lifestyle with the parishioners of St. Anne's Church.

In response, during the month of March, the vocation Animation [VAT] offered weekly, the following programmes which were well received.



Doing Mission Work in Myanmar by Sr. Jacqueline Chin. She shared her work and ministry with the poor in Myanmar

Holistic Wellness by Sr. Jane Chong. She spoke of her mission with the sick and the Canossian Wellness Center's ethos in serving the poor and others in need of alternative medical therapies.



Caring for the Sick and terminally ill by Sr. Geraldine Tan. The community from St Joseph's Home came to share how the Sisters are involved in caring for the sick at the Home.

Sharing various ministries by a team from the Association of Lay Canossians. Ms Louise Lee, a Consecrated Lay Canossian, and a few other Canossians shared various ways of being a part of the Canossian Family.



HOLY HOUR for Vocations was conducted by Sr Christine Santhou and VAT. A presentation of the meaning of Religious Life, followed by a prayer service, was shared with the people who came.

Education and School Pastoral Ministry by Sr. Cecily Pavri. The role of parents in Catholic Schools and how we offer Pastoral Care in our Canossian Schools were shared with the people.



The above mentioned evening talks were attended by many enthusiastic parishioners of different age groups. They got to know more about the Canossians in

Singapore and other parts of the world. Questions were fielded and Sisters and Lay Partners were more than happy to respond accordingly.

Apart from the weekly sessions, the Sisters from VAT were also present in the Church grounds on Sundays. Posters, informative flyers and medals were offered to the parishioners who came for Sunday Masses and catechism for Children. Many were happy to stop and chat with the Sisters and some even offered donations. Adults and children were also delighted to receive small Canossian medals and souvenirs.

On the whole it was a very enriching experience for both the Sisters and the parishioners who said it was nice to see Sisters around and requested that we go back to the parish more often. Sisters were grateful that the people of St Anne's parish were so welcoming and it was a joy to be with them and to share this bit of their lives.

We thank God, and all who made this possible, for this opportunity to 'make Jesus known and loved' in the Spirit of St Magdalene of Canossa.

- *Sr Christine Santhou*



A Surrendered Life

As I was leaving for Rome, there came an email request, ' Could you please write an article for Canorita' from your experience of Consecrated Life?' I told the writer that I was rushing to Rome to keep my date for my Annual retreat as I had already booked it much earlier in the year.

Now that I have returned from a spiritually refreshing directed retreat at the Jesuit Retreat centre in Rome, I am ready to share my experience of my Consecrated life (53 years) in a poem. The poem expresses my aspirations and feelings about my relationship with the Lord, and that's what I feel a life of Religious Consecration is all about.



A Surrendered Life

Only to rest where God places me, only to do His Will;
only to be what He made me, never to look beyond me out of my little sphere;
if I could fill another's place, God would not keep me here.

Only to take what He gives me, meek as a little child;
Questioning not the reason, only to do what He bids me.
Patiently, gladly with no thought for the tomorrow, leaning on Him all the way.

Only to look to Him always; only to sit at His feet
All that He says, to do it; then shall my life be complete
A life lived surrendered to Him; to be used as His malleable clay
Endless peace within, it brings a thrilling joy
that permeates and radiates all around.



As to how I live out this poem...the
striving is on my part
And on His part...the empowering of me
with His love and grace,
Together we move forward...till life's
journey ends...
One thing I know...He will never fail me!

May I take this opportunity to thank all
the dear sisters and friends for your
prayers and the solidarity you showed
us in our sorrow during our recent
bereavement for our dearest brother,
Fr. Antoni Ponnudurai, SJ, who was the best gift God
had given our family.



Sr. Calista and the family



S E R E N I T Y

Called and Supported

Last December I was given permission to accompany my sister, Gabrielle, to Angra Dos Reis (Rio de Janeiro) to take care of my nephew Bruno who had a very serious car accident on November 30. He was very fortunate because a colleague happened to drive past and brought him to the hospital immediately. He had a 4-inch gash on his head, broken shoulder and collar bones. When we arrived on December 6, Bruno already had 4 operations to his head.

Bruno drifted in and out of consciousness. On December 8, the feast day of our Lady of Immaculate Conception, we found ourselves in the town's Parish of the Immaculate Conception, enveloped in its festivities. We managed to find Frei Janicio, a young Carmelite priest who agreed to hear Bruno's confession. Bruno was able to receive communion too.

On December 12 we were told that the Surgeon, Dr Nakamura, wanted to see us. He told us that Bruno's brain had swelled and was bleeding and that he had to undergo surgery again. By now Bruno was not very conscious. After surgery, Bruno regained semi-consciousness but was very drowsy... the next day we were not able to wake him.... He did not wake up till 6 days later.



Solidarity with our Sisters in Piebeta

In the meantime, my sister and I continued our quest of attending daily mass, visiting him in hospital and returning to the apartment. The parish is small so we became a familiar sight in town. The priest had rallied the parishioners to pray for Bruno and as I was the only religious in town, people would tap on my shoulder and ask "How is Bruno?", or assured us with words of comfort, "we are praying for him."

On Christmas day, Bruno was still drowsy and had always answered our questions while his eyes remained closed. Frei Janicio came to anoint him and prayed with him.

The next day, when we visited him again, he was walking, aided by a nurse! We couldn't believe our eyes. From then on, Bruno continued to make good progress. By January 4, the doctor certified him fit for travel. We were overjoyed! We brought him for mass on the Feast of the Epiphany, which was also the feast of the town, Angra of the 3 kings. There was much rejoicing and after mass the parishioners

came to bless him and prayed over him because the priest had announced that Bruno would be returning to Singapore that night.

We are grateful to the many people who had journeyed with us towards Bruno's recover. His colleagues of Brasfel made very many sacrifices for us and gave us tremendous support, the people of Angra too, had availed themselves to assist us.



Bruno's colleagues Yann and Jansen would make the 45 minutes trip to attend to his grooming

I am grateful to the Institute and my sisters for their support and prayers during this harrowing time.

This experience has strengthened my solidarity with the bigger Canossian world.



Bruno resumes his love for water sport

I thank God for sending angels to protect and guide Bruno. After two months of recuperation, Bruno was back at work and, after 10 months hiatus, Bruno is back to the love of his life..... water sports

Praise God!!

- *Sr Rose Low*



New Mission: Mothering My Mother

I come from a Chinese family who decided to migrate from Singapore to Australia more than forty years ago. However as I had already decided to join the convent at that time, the family moved on and left me behind. The last one to move over was my mother. At first she was reluctant to leave her comfort zone at Queenstown, but the desire to be together with her growing brood of grandchildren was too strong to resist. With much courage and some struggle she adjusted to her new life as an Australian citizen.

What helped her tremendously was her involvement in the growth of the six grandchildren, two of whom she practically nursed from birth. Once they were well on the way to tertiary education and independent living, she spent her time volunteering as the “mama-san” of a mah-jong club in the heart of Chinatown in Adelaide. This gave her a sense of mission and purpose for each day as she went faithfully to open up the club and prepare the tables for her Chinese friends to play.

As age crept up on her, she started learning tai-chi exercises to strengthen her bones and swimming to relieve her muscle cramps. During my regular visits to my mother and siblings in Adelaide I have seen her ageing over the years.

At the same time I was keeping an eye on my wheelchair-bound father left at St Joseph’s Home. Thanks to the vigilant care of the Sisters and staff there, he lived to a ripe old age of 89 before he passed on prayerfully and peacefully in 2001. This experience of assisting my father in his old age and in his moment of death left a deep impression on me. I believe it was the Lord’s way of calling me to the pastoral care of the sick and elderly, a branch of our Canossian charism that I had, up to now, little or no exposure to.

To my great surprise, I received another similar experience four years later when I was in Hong Kong conducting the charismatic month for Sisters from the Asia-Pacific region. It happened in the most unexpected way and I can only surmise that the Lord was renewing his call to me.

My father had left behind his first wife and a daughter in Hong Kong when he came to Singapore just before the Japanese invasion in World War II. Stuck in a helpless situation, he thought he would never go back and so settled down to start a family with my mother. Even after the war, he remained faithful to her and to us children although he maintained contact with my step-mother and sister. I renewed ties with them both when I was posted to Hong Kong to teach there after my final vows. To my delight I found they were both fervent Catholics and very affirming of me as a Sister, in fact, much more than my own family. I considered it my good fortune to have two families to belong to.



However as I was not in regular contact with them, I did not realise that my step-mother was also ailing. During the charismatic month in November 2005, I found her being cared for in a nursing home. When she was critically ill, I took time off to visit her in hospital, cleaning her and feeding her. When my niece rang to inform me tearfully that grandma had passed on, I was present with the Sisters of the charismatic month to pray at her wake and funeral. I mourned for her as she has always been a brave and self-sacrificing single mother in her lifetime. What, I wondered, was the Lord telling me through this intense moment of grief and loss? Why was I in the right place at the right time to assist my dying step-mother and farewell her in her journey onto eternity? Not by chance, surely?

When I visited my mother again after this event, I found her already weaker and more needy. Over the years severe osteo-arthritis had set in and her mobility was now seriously compromised. She was no longer able to use public transport to get around. However her mind remained as sharp as ever; it was only her body that was letting her down as she wanted to continue her active daily routine, the early morning swim and the mah-jong club.

After discernment with my superiors, and after completing my duties in the province and community, I took the plunge to join my family in Australia and position myself as a carer for my mother. The past five years have been very much a “learning on the job” experience as I had to assess the gaps my mother needed me to fill. Humorously I see myself as her “foreign helper” in Australia, becoming the arms and legs to reach where she is unable to. My daily duties include housekeeping, cleaning, laundering, marketing and cooking.

However, beyond these external tasks, I am discovering that holistic pastoral care involves the well-being of the person in her relationship to God and others. So I find myself intervening when misunderstandings arise at the mah-jong table, when she habitually whines and blames others for her frustrations or when her moods start to fluctuate. More than being a carer, I am also a “spiritual mother” to her as I have been to my own father and step-mother in the past.

This latest ministry in Adelaide has helped me understand the Foundress’ desire for us to become mothers to those in our care, whether these be the children, the poor, the sick or, in my case, my mother. Motherhood has a very humanising effect as everything gets reduced to the essentials and priorities. That’s how we stop being petty and develop the “big-hearts” and the “aria of Monte Baldo” that Magdalene so eloquently speaks of.

I feel tremendously awed and privileged to have understood these aspects of the charism more. At the same time my prayer life has become more simple, more child-like. In happy moments I praise God, in difficult moments, I seek him, in quiet moments I worship him and in painful moments, I just trust him.

Sr Liz Tham, Adelaide, 8 September 2015

My Sunset Days

By nature, I was very active in my younger days, in walking, thinking and in doing. My favourite words, "Quicker and Faster!" Always thinking about what I would do next! My mind was always ahead of my movements and I often reminded myself: "Do not waste time." I was happy when I was busy.. much the same as how I feel now.



Now I am content with my journey on earth. Life has many facets but, on earth here, there is only ONE. The real and ever- lasting journey will begin after death, and for this I long. This thought has helped me transcend everything I do, with a purpose, for the benefit of others. Now I am free to dedicate my life, in using my God- given gifts for different purposes. I like to knit small hats for the poor children of Myanmar. I have another hobby which is to collect stamps, sell them and donate the proceeds from the sale of these stamps to the poor in Timor-East.

I seek to be pleasant to others with my words and deeds.. to be the first to greet everyone I meet with a hearty, "Good Morning!" and, with a smile, offer a word of faith and hope in welcoming visitors to our Home. I know it is the Lord who opens the door to our Brothers and Sisters and to invite them on our journey towards our "True Home".

It is the Lord who has given us a new Hope for a better world, where the downtrodden and the poor have dignity as children of the same Father. The strength of the Risen Lord frees us from every "fear".

Fear is the main obstacle to love- Fear of oneself, in saying: "I am incapable." Fear of the past: "I have tried many times... I have made mistakes... I do not trust myself." Fear of what people would say about me. Fear of the future: "Will I remain faithful? etc.

I conclude with Eric Liddell, the Olympic runner: "When I run, I feel God's pleasure."

This thought that God is happy with the way he has used his talents filled Eric with uplifted energy and enthusiasm. He was motivated by an inner sense that God had given him a special gift and God wanted him to use it to the fullest. God was happy when he optimized that gift. So, I too, I am happy and full of joy awaiting to walk in God's glory, after this earthly life and to embark on the "New Journey", the everlasting journey to God where there will be no more suffering, neither days nor nights, no death, but singing forever the Glory of the Lord, Alleluia!

- Sr. Maria Casarotti

Everywhere: Bakhita Has Loving Friends



Mr Joseph Loo Lee Kwang is a resident of St. Joseph's Home Singapore. One day I told a small group of Residents the story of St. Josephine Bakhita. Loo LK was touched by the sufferings of this Sister. The picture of St. Josephine Bakhita was prominently displayed at St. Joseph's Home. Loo LK often spent time gazing at the picture of the Saint. The Catechist asked him why he had been spending so much time in front of the picture of the Saint. He answered that as she had suffered so much during her lifetime, he too, would like to believe in the same loving God. He was from China. He came to Singapore in search of work, but he was always sick. He was admitted to various hospitals many times and had lost contact with his relatives in China. The social worker recommended him to our Home, where he now calls "home" and was baptised.

Another lady, Mdm Tan, also loved Bakhita. She had requested for a book on Bakhita and would sometimes shed tears while reading about Bakhita's sufferings. She identified her own sufferings with that of Bakhita. She, too, had lost contact with her family and decided she wanted to know more about the God of Bakhita. She was baptised on her 90th birthday with the name, Josephine Bakhita.



I like to end my 2 stories with a Tribute of Praise to St. Josephine Bakhita.

*"Your heart has known, how to kiss these hands,
which made you a slave.
Through them the Infinite love of God wants you
and chooses you and loves you totally."*

Today, in your dark skin, shines the face of God and through your joy,
You embrace us as a Sister and as a Mother."

*Rose Lee (Catechist)
St. Joseph's Home*

Walking With The Times

In a recent article in the Straits Times, I came across an interesting article on leadership entitled: Mind your E's and P's. It referred to Jack Welch, the former chairman and chief executive of General Electric who had an inspirational, innovative leadership style.

By having a "lead more, manage less" philosophy, he embraced change and had an uncanny ability to hire the right people while giving them room to spread their wings. His 4E's + 1P philosophy consists in:

Positive Energy, the ability to thrive on action and relish change;

Ability to Energise others, ability to motivate others and inspire the team to enjoy challenge;

Edge, the courage to make tough and timely decisions, to tackle problems head on;

Execution, the ability to get the job done in a competitive environment, and finally,

Passion, a heartfelt, deep and authentic excitement about work, learning and growing together.

My experience in the last two years at the Eduplex have given me the opportunity to work in close partnership with two of our lay leaders who have exhibited good leadership, with a Canossian spirit. I would like to thank God especially for Terry, principal of Canossian School and Lai Chun, ED of Canossaville Children's Home. As Supervisor of these two ministries, it has been my privilege to share challenging moments in discerning and decision making with them and the respective Management Committees, within a fast changing social landscape.

At **Canossaville Children's Home**, we have worked in partnership with the various Government agencies and stakeholders. As the enrolment in our Residential Home continues to be much lower than in the past, we responded to the invitation by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) to look into foster care as an option and complementing the services of our Residential Home. Supported by the Management Board, our Chairperson, Selvathi and I were invited by MSF to join them on a study tour to Sydney and Melbourne in May 2014. Subsequently, we also applied to be a Fostering Agency for MSF. The challenge ahead is in building the capacities of our Residential staff to meet the changing landscape of families.

In February this year, we welcomed our new ED, Wong Lai Chun, an ex-pupil of Canossa Convent Primary School and St. Anthony's Convent Sec School. With her social work and human resource background, she is leading the team with great passion and confidence, open to the new challenges.



We have been selected by MSF to be one of their agents for Assessment of potential foster parents. This requires a very thorough process of screening and interviewing these parents to assess their suitability on all levels, psychological, intellectual, emotional, financial etc. It has been a very positive experience and to date we have successfully completed about a dozen cases. The philosophy behind this is that vulnerable children will

have a healthier and more natural environment to grow up in, away from their biological families.

We must not forget that St Magdalene has always reminded us of the spiritual/pastoral aspect of the integral development of our children. To this end, the Home continues to provide pastoral care for both staff and children, emphasizing the “formation of the heart” and character formation.

In June this year, I had the opportunity to join **Canossian School** for a study trip to Sydney, Australia. It was motivated by the fact that much research has been done in the area of oralism, bilingualism and bimodality, depending on the child’s needs.

Within a matter of a week, the 10-member team visited schools and were very impressed by the person-centred approach everywhere, from Sheperd Centre that advocates oralism (similar to Canossian School) to the Royal Institute for the Deaf and Blind and their schools : RIDBC advocates for bilingualism and bimodality. We also had a very insightful educational tour of Cochlear Australia HQ. The trip was an eye- opener and very enriching.

The team had daily de-briefs, during which each shared their learning points for the day: They were summarized as follows:

- 1. Need to be child-centric.** How can the school help to engage the child in his learning? If a child is unable to be engaged through audition, how else can the school engage the child?
- 2. Working with the family.** The school must understand the family and their needs when working with the child. How will a deaf child communicate at home if both his parents and siblings are deaf?
- 3. Leverage on technology** to enable the deaf child to hear, listen and speak.

4. Use sign language to augment oralism for children who do not benefit solely from audition.

5. A **language rich environment** to maximise learning and speech.

Our Australian counterparts do not view the use of sign language and spoken language as one being better than the other. For children who can access audition and are on the path to be oral, they should be supported. For some deaf children the path to being oral is challenging. They may have issues like thin/ missing nerves or delayed amplification. For such children sign language becomes an augmentation. The focus is how to use bimodality to engage the child in his/ her learning.



At Roberta Reid pre-school, a prerequisite for admission is that all pupils must learn to sign. The school needs to understand why the parents want their deaf child to use sign language. Some of the reasons are: deaf parents and family members. If the child is oral, the school supports oral development. The deaf children we observed were able to speak very well and sign concurrently.

In our conversations with the faculty staff at Sheperd Centre and RIDBC, it was very clear that all will be done to help the child access technology to hear, listen and speak.

The trip also affirmed the school of its processes. Canossian School will continue to advocate for oralism, be pupil centric and family oriented in our approaches. It will continue to look at how we can better serve our children who come from diverse backgrounds. It is good to hold the questions and be innovative in seeking the best way for each child to reach his/her potential: Who should access sign language to augment spoken language? To include the bimodal pupils should the other pupils learn to sign too? If there is only one pupil in the class who needs bimodality should the others in the class learn to sign in order to engage their classmate? Should the school consider prototyping bimodality? Would enabling the pupils to sign provide them with a means to interact with a wider circle of people? The analogy shared was Australian pupils learning to speak Chinese. Learning two languages is better than being monolingual.

CS is at a critical juncture of our journey. As we continue to advocate strongly for oralism and inclusion, what role does bimodality have in enabling our pupils to develop linguistic independence.

MOE has been supporting the school in our journey thus far. MOE recognises how open and receptive the school and the SMC have been in conversations about bimodality.



May the Lord bless us and strengthen us in our mission of love as we prepare to celebrate our nation's 50th birthday, with a grateful heart for the many helping hands who have partnered us in making our Home and School a safe sanctuary for every child who enters our gate.

Sr. Marilyn Lim



Our Children with Hearing Impairment singing, playing music and dancing.



Life- Long Formation

Together with 33 Sisters of the Canossian world, Sr. Louisa and I had the privilege to attend the **International Congress for Formators in Consecrated Life** organized by the Vatican (7-11 April 2015) in Rome. International speakers including Fr. Michael Mcguire and our Canossian Father Amedeo Cencini helped the 1,300 participants from 106 countries to reflect on various aspects of the theme:



“Living in Christ according to the Form of Life of the Gospel.” The sessions were interspersed with prayer, sharing at table communities and workshops. It concluded with Mass concelebrated by the presiding Cardinals and priests in St. Peter’s Basilica & a special audience with Pope Francis.

Card. De Aviz reminded us of what Pope Francis wrote in his letter for the Year of Consecrated Life:



*“Looking back at the past with gratitude,
Living the present with passion,
Embracing the future with hope.”*



It was with these sentiments in our hearts that we continued with our own **Canossian International Seminar** in Ottavia from 13 to 19 April.

Sr. Annamaria Babbini, our Congregational Leader, looking back at the history of the Institute with gratitude, shared how the charism of Magdalene is still very much alive after 207 years and urged us to live our identity with creativity and passion. In the face of challenges and difficulties, we need to deepen our understanding of the charism so as to pass on this precious heritage to others.

The General Council assisted by Sr. Eliana Zanoletti & Sr. Annamaria Battisti, guided us through the process of understanding formation as a life-long process of integration. We acquired deeper insights into the personality of Magdalene and her spiritual journey by



going through the stages Magdalene went through in her experience from being a daughter in the noble family of Canossa to becoming a Daughter of Charity, witnessing to the love of God through selfless service to the poor.

While reflecting on the Canossian style of prayer, and the virtues of humility and charity through a deeper understanding of the Unabridged Rule, we touched the heart of Magdalene who received the special gift of looking into the heart of Jesus Crucified so as to do and be like him (*Inspice et Fac*).

We enjoyed the group exercise of re-writing some passages of the Unabridged Rule on Fraternal Charity in the language of today.

Fr Amedeo challenged us to look into our hearts and ask ourselves: “*what is my heart’s deepest desire?*” *Am I growing in “Docibilitas”* - the desire to be formed by the Father according to the Heart of the Son, in everyday life? This is a life-long journey. What many of us found most helpful is the practice of keeping the Gratitude Journal, thanking God for the blessings of each day.



We also had lunch with the Sisters of San Michele Community. The experience of meeting Sisters from the different cultural realities living and expressing the same charism of the Greatest Love of Christ Crucified today was most enriching. We felt affirmed and strengthened to return to our Provinces to share with gratitude and joy the gift we have received.

Sr. Louisa and most of the Sisters carried on with a pilgrimage to Verona, Venice, Schio and Pavia, tracing the footsteps of St. Magdalene & St Bakhita, while I went to visit our Sisters in Tradate & Vimercate.



Province Life- Long Formation Sessions

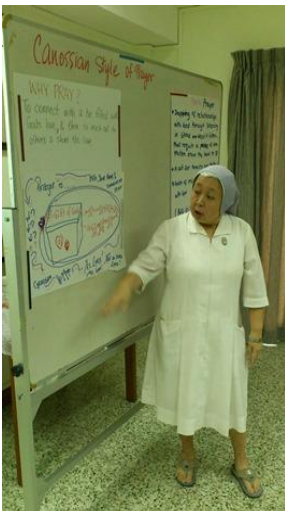
Upon our return to Singapore Sr. Louisa & I shared our experience with the Provincial Council and the **Province Life-long Formation Team (PLIFT)**.

In response to our need for life-long Formation, we then echoed our experience to all the Sisters of our Province at the Province Assembly as well as in two consecutive Formation days for Sisters in two age groups.

Age-group Formation Sessions at Loyang Bungalow: 22-23 Sept. 2015



Age-group Formation Sessions at Lifespings: 9-10 Oct. 2015



On-going Formation in Community



We also prepared formative materials for the Sisters to share in their respective communities.

The Sisters enjoyed coming together to deepen our Charism and came up with very insightful group reflections.

- Sr. Janet Wang

GREETINGS FROM OUR SISTERS IN TRADATE & VIMERCATE

After our International Charismatic Seminar I made a flying visit to Tradate to visit M. Elide Testa and her community. There I had the chance to bring them greetings from our Sisters in Singapore and to share with them about our Myanmar Mission, asking them for their prayers.



Then I proceeded to Vimercate to visit our beloved missionary Sisters and brought back greetings from Srs. Natalina Biffi, Angela Garavaglia & Josephine Borsani.



Seminar on Our Renewed Constitutions

by Bro. Joel Giallanza: 1-7 Dec. 2015

Bro. Joel Giallanza, a Holy Cross brother, flew all the way from Texas to conduct the 7-day seminar on our renewed Constitutions. He made the printed word come to life by his deep insights on our Canossian Charism, springing from a genuine appreciation and love of Magdalene, our Mother Foundress. He dealt with our Constitutions from a spiritual, theological perspective and quoted often from Magdalene's Memoirs and letters. All his sessions were enriched by his life experiences, vividly presented in stories with his characteristic sense of humour. He helped us to make a paradigm shift: Instead of looking at our Rule of Life from a legalistic perspective, we rediscovered in a new way, its life-giving nature. Bro Joel encouraged us not only to reflect on, but also to pray with some lines from our Constitutions.

We really enjoyed the sessions given by our Holy Cross "Canossian" Brother who also has a great love for Mary, Mother of Love at the foot of the Cross, whom Magdalene considers as the real Foundress of our Institute. When the English version of our renewed Constitutions arrives, we will all be receiving it with deep gratitude and joy,



in the context of a paraliturgy of prayer, as a **precious gift** from God, through our Mother Foundress and the thousands of Canossian Sisters, Brothers and Laity

who have kept the fire of the charism alive with creativity and passion, down the years from the time when Pope Leo first gave his official approval to the Rules in 1828. It is our privilege to have this **precious heritage** as a guide giving us direction in our journey of life as joyful and prophetic witnesses of the Greatest Love of Jesus Crucified in our time.

Sr. Janet Wang

A Quick Glance Over 2015





INSTALLATION OF PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Thank you for saying
"YES" to serve.



Province Assembly, Setting Directions...



Annual Retreat at Lifespring

1st Profession of Sr Antonia Mya Mya



1st Profession of Sr Maria Ja-Awn



Welcome Postulants Magdalena, Benedine and Susan

W E L C O M E



Our New Oblates,
Praying Warriors



O N E N E S S



Lay Canossian 50th Anniversary Celebration
(Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore)



Welcoming New Lay Canossians & Purple Ladies



Sr Mary S,

Jesus welcomes you.

Continue to pray for us

We Miss You!!!

12/4/1940- 23/11/2015

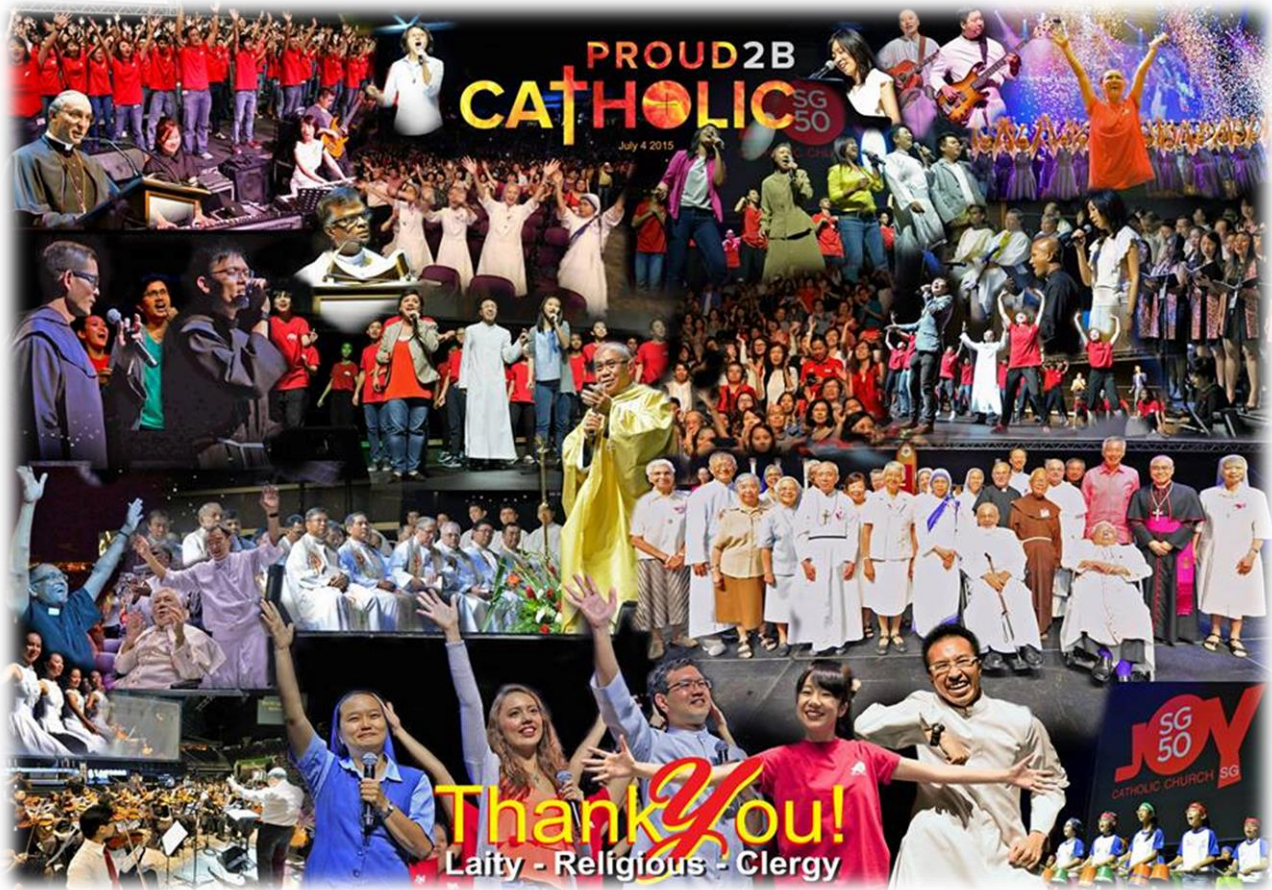


**Easter Choral Festival by
Canossian Schools and Sisters**



**Canossian Schools Outing
with Alumni**

Universal Studio Singapore



SG50 CELEBRATION



WITH THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF SINGAPORE

SG50 CELEBRATION



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Chinese New Year Celebration



Joy of the Gospel- Fr David Garcia



Art & Spirituality Workshop at Lifespings



SMC Outing to the Zoo



Lunch with Admin Staff of Canossian Schools



Ukulele Jamming Session with Agnes & Friends



Ukulele Practices with Agnes, Elizabeth & Pauline

T Y B A S
O R I L C



X'PERIENCE THE JOY OF MAKING JESUS KNOWN AND LOVED
with the Canossian Daughters of Charity in Singapore & Myanmar

Website: canossians-sg.org | Email: csbakhita@bigfoot.com

L D I T
P D C E
D A P O
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